

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PIRORITY 5127

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 15395

LIMDIS

FOR EUR/WE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: DELEGATION TO THE PAPAL CORONATION: TALKING POINTS FOR POSSIBLE
MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PERTINI

BACKGROUND

1. THE EMBASSY PROVIDED BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON PERTINI IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS ELECTION AS PRESIDENT (ROME 13247 ET SEQ.). IN THE EIGHT WEEKS SINCE HIS ELECTION PERTINI'S POPULARITY, JUDGING FROM THE PRESS COVERAGE, APPEARS TO HAVE STEADILY GROWN. HE HAS ALSO INTRODUCED A NEW STYLE INTO THE PRESIDENCY, ONE COMBINING GREAT RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF THE OFFICE WITH PERSONAL INFORMALITY AND SIMPLICITY. IN HIS INITIAL CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES, PERTINI SHOWED HIMSELF TO BE FRIENDLY AND PRAISED THE AIMS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. PRESIDENT PERTINI WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL TOWARD MRS. LILLIAN CARTER AND SINCE THEIR MEETING HAS SEVERAL TIMES PUBLICLY REFERRED TO THE PLEASURE OF THEIR CONVERSATION TOGETHER. HOWEVER, IF AS IS LIKELY HE HAS LEARNED OF THE LEAK TO JACK ANDERSON OF THE EMBASSY'S REPORTING TELEGRAM ON THIS MEETING, HE IS APT TO HAVE BEEN DEEPLY OFFENDED BY THE BREACH OF CONFIDENCE.

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PRESIDENT PERTINI'S INITIAL MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR GARDNER WAS ALSO CORDIAL (ROME 13536). A MAJOR POINT WHICH EMERGED FROM THAT SESSION WAS PERTINI'S APPEAL FOR THE UNITED STATES TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY HAD TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PRESENT GOVERNING FORMULA.

CAUTIONS

2. IN ANY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PERTINI SEVERAL POINTS ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S BACKGROUND AND CHARACTER MUST BE BORNE IN MIND:

--IN THE PAST PERTINI WAS STRONGLY CRITICAL OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY BECAUSE OF ITS INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM AND CHILE AND ITS SUPPORT FOR CERTAIN RIGHT-WING GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE WORLD. AT THE PRESENT TIME PERTINI SEEMS TO BE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE OBJECTIVES OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. ON BALANCE HE IS NOW PROBABLY AT LEAST NEUTRAL, IF NOT POSITIVELY INCLINED TOWARD THE UNITED STATES.

--A LIFE-LONG SOCIALIST AND MAN OF THE LEFT, PERTINI HAS A PROFOUND INTEREST IN CIVIL LIBERTIES, HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL REFORM, THE PROBLEMS OF THE THIRD WORLD AND DISARMAMENT. THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POLICIES ON THESE ISSUES APPEAR TO HAVE CONSIDERABLE APPEAL TO HIM, THE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON THESE AREAS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN POLICY.

--WHILE A MAN OF UNUSUAL WARMTH AND INFORMALITY, PERTINI, AS PRESIDENT OF ITALY, EXPECTS DEFERENCE. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT TO LET HIM TAKE THE LEAD IN CONVERSATION WHILE GIVING HIM FRANK ANSWERS TO ANY POINTS OR QUESTIONS WHICH HE RAISES. ON THE WHOLE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE MEETING SHOULD BE KEPT ON A GENERAL POLICY CONFIDENTIAL

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PLANE UNLESS PERTINI HIMSELF WANTS TO DISCUSS SPECIFIC ISSUES IN DETAIL.

3. SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

--THE PRESIDENT HAS ASKED ME TO THANK YOU FOR RECEIVING HIS MOTHER DURING HER VISIT TO ROME. BOTH MRS. CARTER AND THE PRESIDENT WERE DEEPLY TOUCHED BY YOUR KINDNESS AND BY THE GENEROUS REMARKS YOU MADE ABOUT THE PRESIDENT AND WHAT HE IS TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH.

--I, TOO, AM DEEPLY HONORED BY THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET YOU. I HAVE HEARD A GREAT DEAL ABOUT YOUR HEROIC RESISTANCE ACTIVITIES IN THE 1920S AND 1930S AND YOUR LONG PERIOD OF IMPRISONMENT AS A RESULT OF YOUR POLITICAL CONVICTIONS IN OPPOSITION TO FASCISM.

--WHAT YOU STAND FOR--YOUR POLITICAL AND PERSONAL INTEGRITY THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE--IS AN INSPIRATION TO PEOPLE EVERYWHERE AND HAS ALREADY DONE MUCH FOR ITALY'S INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE.

--I AM DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY YOUR CONTINUED DEVOTION TO CIVIL LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS AS EVIDENCED IN

YOUR SUPPORT OF THE SOVIET DISSIDENTS.

--FROM THE OUTSET OF THIS ADMINISTRATION PRESIDENT CARTER AND I HAVE MADE THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS A MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF OUR GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE TRIED TO PURSUE THIS OBJECTIVE NOT ONLY IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS BUT ALSO IN THE CSCE FRAMEWORK.

--THE PRESIDENT AND I CONSIDER ITALY A KEY COUNTRY, IN THE INNER MOST CIRCLE OF OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES. WE HAVE BOTH GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO ITALY'S PROBLEMS AND ARE ANXIOUS TO HELP ITALY HOWEVER WE CAN. THE POLICY OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TOWARD ITALY HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY WHAT WE CALL "A STRATEGY OF COOPERATION." I WOULD BE MOST INTERESTED IN HEARING YOUR VIEWS ON THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SITUATION.
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--I WOULD BE HONORED TO CONVEY TO PRESIDENT CARTER ANY MESSAGE WHICH YOU MAY HAVE FOR HIM.

4. FYI WE HAVE BEEN INFORMALLY ADVISED BY FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL THAT PERTINI MAY NOT RETURN TO ROME AT TIME OF PAPAL CORONATION. END FYI. HOLMES

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